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BOOK NUMBER A389  
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# FOOD IS A GOOD BUY



FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

With wages from 8  
 buy this much  
**MORE**  
 food than  
 he could  
 in 1947-49



4.8 LBS  
 MORE  
 CHOICE B



4 1-LB. LOAVES  
 MORE  
 BREAD

8 hrs. would buy



CHOICE B

IN 1947-49



15.2

IN 1960



20



# hours' work a factory worker can



or

11.2 LBS.  
MORE  
PORK CUTS

or



12.8 QTS.  
MORE  
MILK



or

14.4 DOZ.  
MORE  
EGGS



or

13.6 LBS.  
MORE  
APPLES

or



30.4 CANS  
MORE  
PEAS

or



40 LBS.  
MORE  
POTATOES

EEF	PORK CUTS	MILK	EGGS	BREAD	APPLES	PEAS	
s.	17.6 lbs.	52 qts.	14.4 doz.	76.8 loaves	87.2 lbs.	48.8 cans	
	28.8 lbs.	64.8 qts.	28.8 doz.	80.8 loaves	100.8 lbs.	79.2 cans	





With wages from 8 hours' work a factory worker can  
buy this much

**MORE**  
food than  
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4.8 LBS.  
MORE  
CHOICE BEEF



11.2 LBS.  
MORE  
PORK CUTS



12.8 QTS.  
MORE  
MILK



14.4 DOZ.  
MORE  
EGGS



4 1-LB. LOAVES  
MORE  
BREAD



13.6 LBS.  
MORE  
APPLES



30.4 CANS  
MORE  
PEAS



40 LBS.  
MORE  
POTATOES

8 hrs. would buy	>	CHOICE BEEF	PORK CUTS	MILK	EGGS	BREAD	APPLES	PEAS	POTATOES
IN 1947-49	>	15.2 lbs.	17.6 lbs.	52 qts.	14.4 doz.	76.8 loaves	87.2 lbs.	48.8 cans	192 lbs.
IN 1960	>	20 lbs.	28.8 lbs.	64.8 qts.	28.8 doz.	80.8 loaves	100.8 lbs.	79.2 cans	232 lbs.



## The Real Cost of Food

Food is one of today's best buys. We are eating better, more nutritious, more varied meals at lower real cost than ever before.

What is the real cost of food? Perhaps the best measure of cost is the number of hours we have to work to pay for our food needs.

The average factory worker in this country today can buy a market basket of farm food for a whole month with the earnings from 43 hours of work. In 1952 he worked 55 hours and in 1947 he worked 64 hours to buy the same amount of food.

Although we spend fewer real dollars, it's true that we consumers spend more at the grocery store than we used to. We spent \$394 per person for food in 1960, compared with \$319 in 1947-49. But the 1960 food costs represented only 20% of our disposable income, compared to 26% in 1947-49.

And if we bought the same quantities and kinds of food today as before World War II, we could eat for even less. If we ate the same foods as we did in 1939, for example, only 15 cents of our spendable dollars would go for food, rather than 20 cents.

## Where the Money Goes

Who receives these extra food dollars? Not the farmer! While the retail cost of the "family farm food market basket" increased \$112 since 1947-49, the return to the farmer actually decreased \$58.

Higher marketing costs account for most of the increase. While the return to the farmer went down 12 percent, labor costs climbed 39 percent, transportation costs went up 43 percent, and other business expenses advanced 33 percent.

About 39 cents of each dollar spent for farm food goes to the farmer or rancher. This is an average for all foods, with wide variation for individual items depending on the processing and other marketing services needed.

For example, the farmer receives:

49 cents of the 81 cents spent for a pound of choice beef

2.3 cents for the corn in a 26-cent box of corn flakes

About 11 cents from a 25-cent quart of milk

2.3 cents for the wheat in a 20-cent loaf of bread

9 cents for the oranges in a 23-cent can of frozen juice

## Cost of Living

Prices paid by consumers for all goods and services—the cost of living—rose 28 percent from 1947-49 to mid-1961. Contributing to this rise were:

Housing—Up 32 percent

Medical Care—Up 61 percent

Transportation—Up 48 percent

Food prices during the same period rose only 21 percent. So the relative stability of food prices—compared with other goods and services—actually helped keep the overall cost of living from rising more than it did.

Housewives may think food costs too much when they see food prices rising. But they may not realize that incomes have been climbing much faster than food prices.

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the take-home pay of the average wage earner in manufacturing in 1960 was 57 percent higher than in 1947-49. But the increase in food prices was only 20 percent. So the wage earner had “extra” income to spend on other items—like television sets, boats, camping equipment, vacations, and other things.

## Living Better

We are spending more money—and we are living better than ever before. We’re eating better, too. And our food purchases are taking a smaller—not a larger—portion of our pay check.

Yes, food is one of today’s best buys.

Issued August 1961



